



I-35 Capital Express Central Project Update

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Director of Transportation Planning and Development

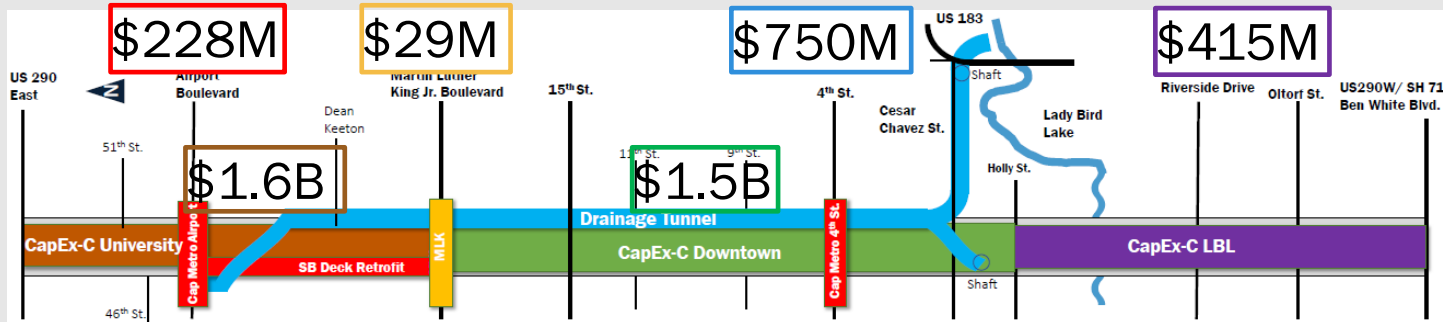


Sept. 28, 2023

I-35 Capital Express Central Project - Overview

- **Limits:** US 290 East to SH 71/Ben White Boulevard
- **Length:** 8 miles
- **Estimated construction cost:** \$4.5 billion
- **Design-Bid-Build:** 6 Projects

	Design-Build Project			
	Oak Hill Parkway	I-35 NEX Central	I-35E Phase II	SE Connector
Contract Amount	\$680M	\$1.5B	\$650M	\$1.6B
Contract Duration	5 Years	6 Years	4 Years	5.5 Years





- Categorical Exclusion (CE) -> CE Determination
 - 5,761 (99%)*
- Environmental Assessment (EA) -> Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
 - 80 FONSI (1%)*
- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) -> Record of Decision (ROD)
 - 5 RODs (0.1%)* *

*Statewide Stats Since January 2019

** Includes I-35 Central and Oakhill Parkway



Environmental Requirements

- Overarching environmental law
 - **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 1969**
- Requires the federal government to consider the environment in major federal actions



Locally-funded Projects

- NEPA does not apply
- Still required to consider other laws:

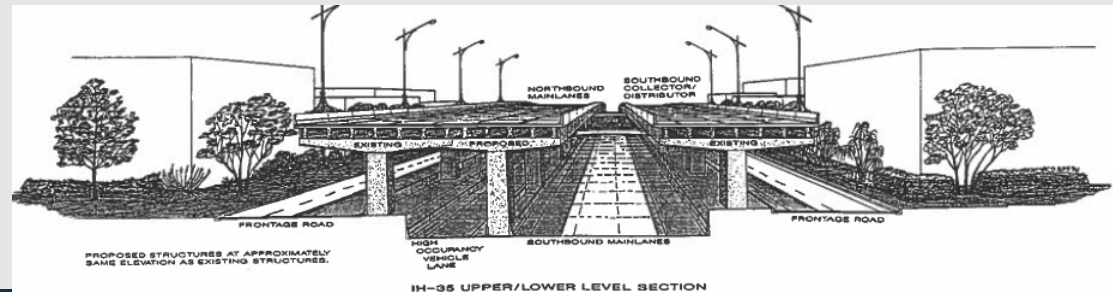
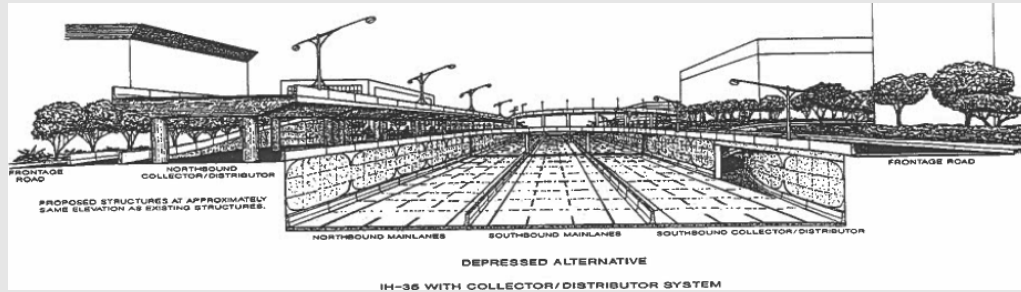
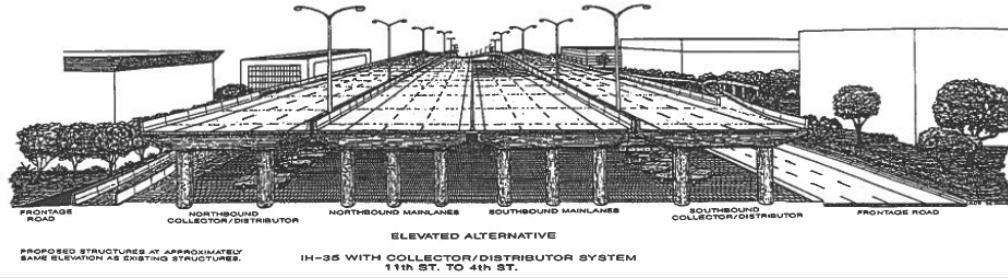


- FIES/ROD evaluated impacts on the human and natural environments, including, but not limited to:
 - traffic noise,
 - air quality,
 - protected lands,
 - community impacts,
 - natural and biological resources,
 - water resources,
 - parklands,
 - land use,
 - cultural and historic resources,
 - greenhouse gas/climate change,
 - hazardous materials,
 - induced growth.

Table ROD-1: Commitments Required by Policy or Regulation for the Preferred Alternative

Table ROD-2: Proposed Mitigation for Preferred Alternative

I-35 Major Investment Study 1994



2014 Downtown Stakeholder Working Group



Findings:

- Lower I-35
- Design for safe and wide bike/ped crossings
- Reconnect Austin concept is not technically feasible but aspects of the Reconnect incorporated into the Depressed concept.

Monthly meetings with stakeholders – 32 Groups

- Senator Watson
- Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA)
- The University of Texas at Austin
- Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
- Capital Metro
- Congress for New Urbanism
- Reconnect Austin
- East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Association
- Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association
- City of Austin Police and Fire Departments
- City of Austin
- CAMPO
- TxDOT

Unresolved Issues:

- The nature of the desired development on potential caps had not been fully defined
- Plan to champion, fund and construct the potential caps had not been established



Forward from Senator Kirk Watson

October 2014

This report is about preparing for Austin's future by planning a better I-35.

It's a story of interested citizens with varied backgrounds and experiences working together for the past year to improve I-35 in downtown Austin, part of the most congested stretch of highway in Texas in 2013.

Members of the I-35 Downtown Stakeholder Working Group represented neighborhood groups, business organizations, local governmental entities, I-35 users and other stakeholders with an interest in the roadway.

They didn't get paid for their work. Their monthly meetings were long and focused on important, but often technical topics: the federally-mandated transportation development process; current conditions and constraints along I-35; the transportation funding process; and options for the downtown area.

As individuals, probably no one got everything they wanted, but as a group their input moves Austin toward a better I-35.

Going beyond the obvious need to add a new lane to I-35, the priorities they voiced for I-35 in downtown Austin are significant. They emphasized the critical need for east/west connectivity. They encouraged the team to take advantage of this opportunity to reduce the "barrier effect" of I-35. They made suggestions to change the entrance and exit ramps, revisions to keep the City's core vital. The Stakeholder Working Group worked hard to develop the urban design standards that will transform I-35 through downtown.



Included more than 100 participants from local agencies:

TxDOT Austin District
City of Austin
Cap Metro
CAMPO
CTRMA
FHWA
UT
DAA



Recommendations/Solutions

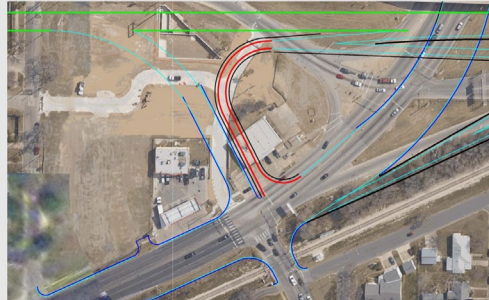
Remove Loop Ramp to Tie to Intersection and Shift West

Advantages:

- Bike/Ped allowance
- Driver expectancy
- Abali Development

Cons:

- Free flow removed
- Impacts ROW West



The I-35 Corridor Austin, Texas

A ULI Advisory Services Panel Report

February 23–28, 2020

Key Recommendations – Cap and Stitch

- The time for setting Austin's future is now!
- The next six to 12 months are a critical time for idea exchange.
- Successful implementation will require new forms of governance: A Scoping Working Group should be formed as soon as possible



The proposed East Fourth Street to East Cesar Chavez Street cap and stitch.

City of Austin Focus Groups Nov 2020



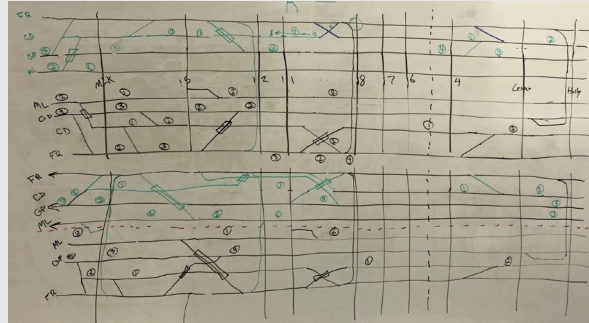
Workshop #1: Managed Lane Access (11/19/2020)

Workshop #2: Drainage and Parkland (12/17/2020)

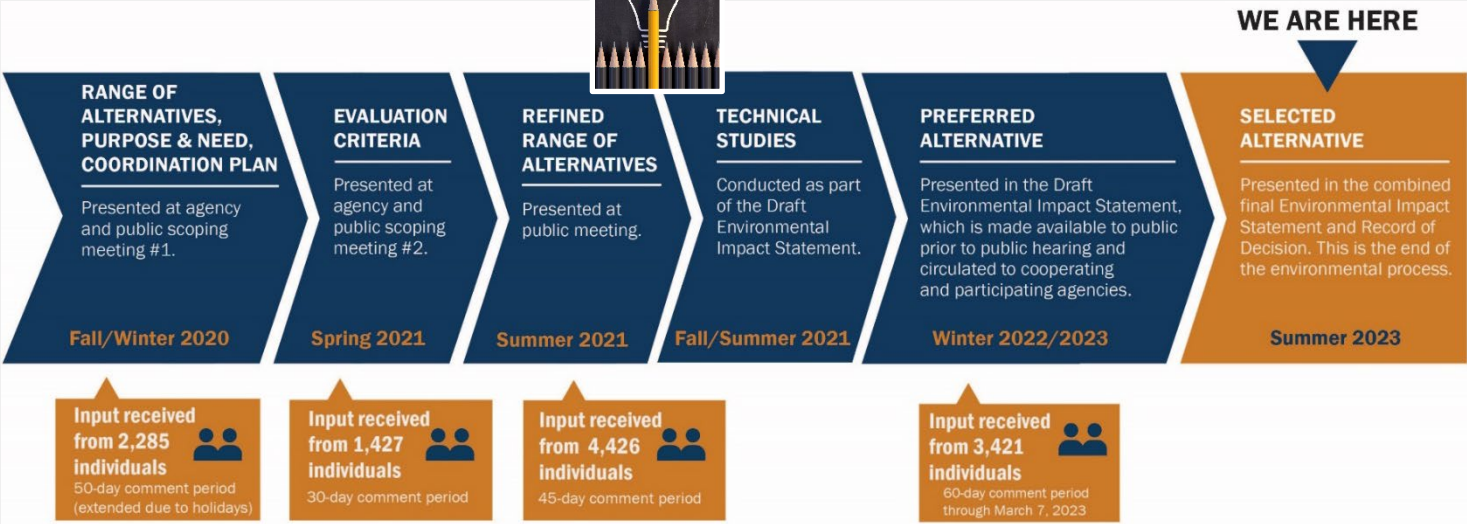
Workshop #3: Bike/Ped Focus (3/12/2021)

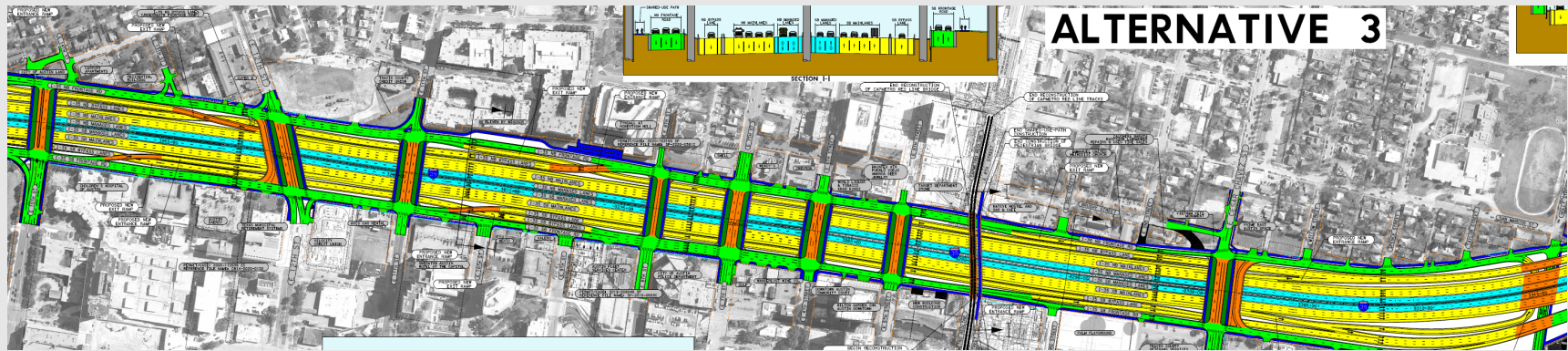
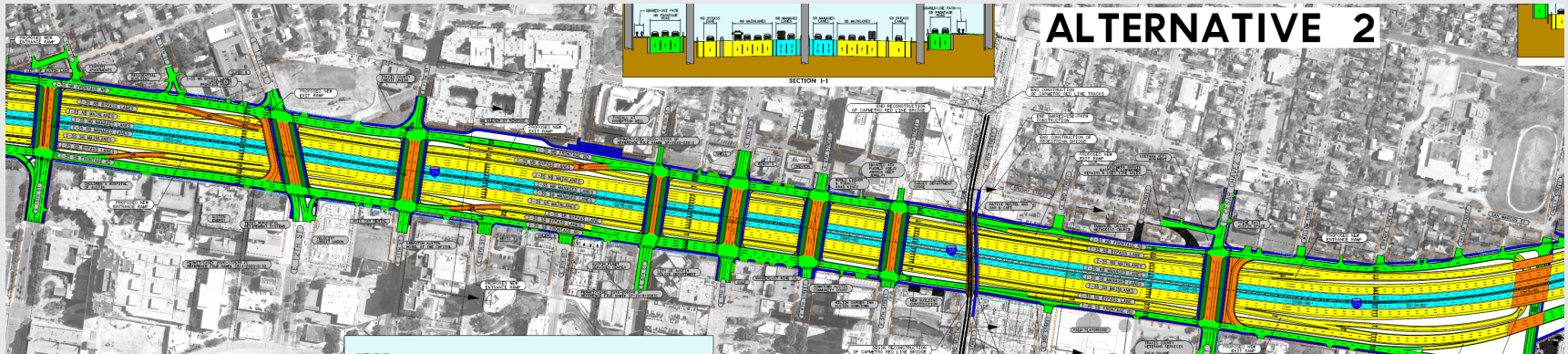
Workshop #4: Airport Blvd & Downtown (4/8/2021)

Workshop #5: Alternatives Workshop (2/25/2022)



Project timeline





“Mod 3.. Reflects progress towards our common goals”
“Gratified by the continued work of TxDOT”
“we are overjoyed to see TxDOT adopt.. urban street design”
“transformative opportunity to define an appropriate urban context”

From: Reconnect Austin
Contact: Heyden Black Walker, Chair, Board of Directors
heyden@blackvernooy.com



Reconnect Austin appreciates the work done by both the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the City of Austin on I-35 Capital Express Central.

Austinites submitted more than 9,500 comments and letters to TxDOT during the 10-month Scoping phase of this project. The entire Austin community should be proud of the high quality, detailed input submitted. This historic level of community engagement illustrates the generational importance of this project to people affected daily by I-35.

The Modified Alternative 3, shared today by TxDOT, reflects progress towards our common goals. Reconnect Austin will continue to work with all stakeholders to design a project which will further contribute to those shared goals. We encourage everyone to review these new plans for I-35 Central and provide feedback to TxDOT as soon as possible. Additional input on today's significant modifications will help further refine this project.

Reconnect Austin remains committed to working with the community, the City of Austin, and TxDOT to address remaining concerns and ensure that we use this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get I-35 right for all citizens of Austin.

Contact: Jay Blazek Crossley
Farm&City
Executive Director
713-244-4746
jay@farmandcity.org

Farm&City appreciates TxDOT and City of Austin improvements to I-35 proposal and looks forward to continuing to develop the plan

AUSTIN, TX – Farm & City is gratified by the continued work of TxDOT and many local stakeholders to improve the I-35 Capital Express Central project so that it will provide needed improvement to the infrastructure used by the people of the Austin region and from across the country. TxDOT has taken the opportunity to consider and analyze meaningfully different alternative transportation improvement options by taking the concerns and preferences of the Austin community seriously.

Among key improvements to the proposal, we are overjoyed to see TxDOT adopt safe design speed and urban street design standards for all surface elements of the project, which will significantly improve safety for all modes, including driving in cars and trucks. Similarly, the urban boulevard proposed alongside caps and stitches presents a transformative opportunity to define an appropriate urban context knitting Austin's core back together.

This has been a long process, but we are pleased that TxDOT has made numerous complex decisions in partnership with people from across the region, the City of Austin, local advocates, and nonprofit organizations, to reconsider assumptions about freeway design standards and design speeds. We believe the changes incorporated by TxDOT will not only help reconnect the core of the city and result in a better functioning freeway for when people are driving, but also increase safety for all road users to help achieve the Road to Zero goal to cut traffic deaths in this district in half over the next decade.

We are confident that TxDOT will continue to work with the City of Austin and diverse stakeholders from the region to build a model project that will contribute to the shared goals of the state and local community, and we look forward to continuing to work with them to ensure that this project will meet the goals of reducing traffic deaths, providing safe access by all modes, and providing for equitable redevelopment of the core of the Austin region.

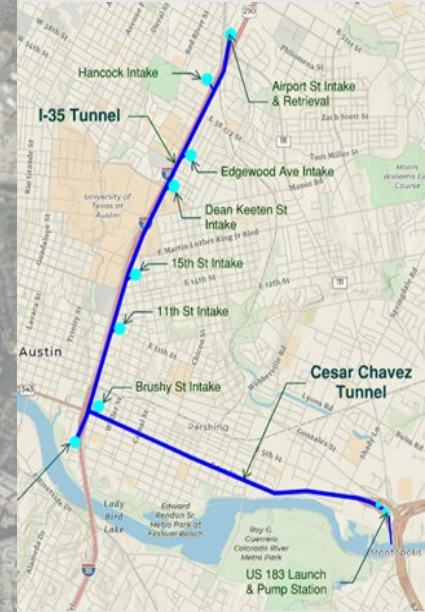
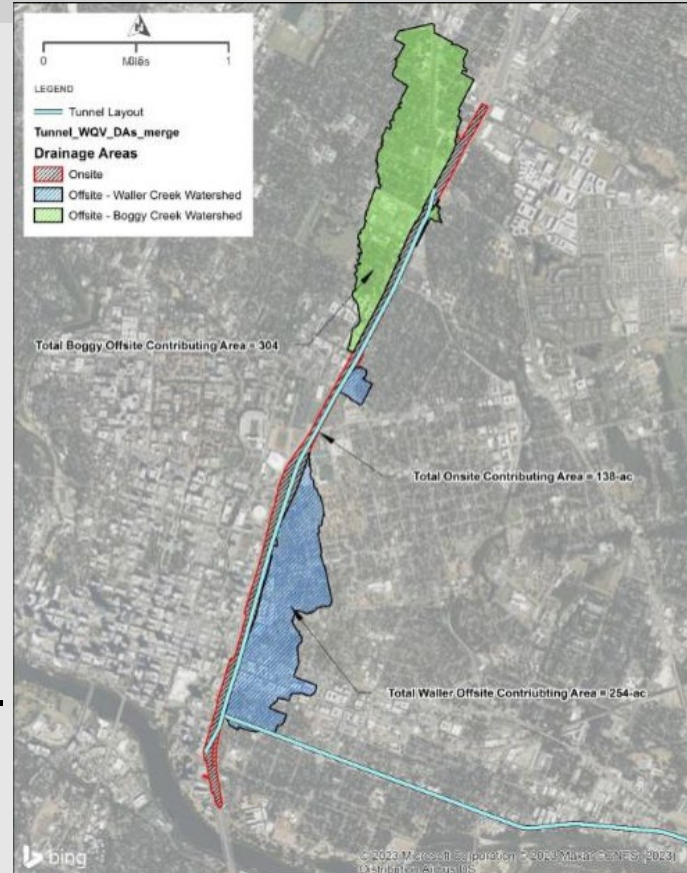


Technical Studies Continue on Alt2/Mod3

Drainage Design



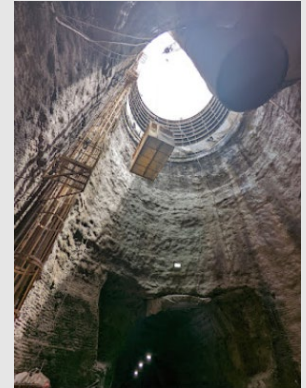
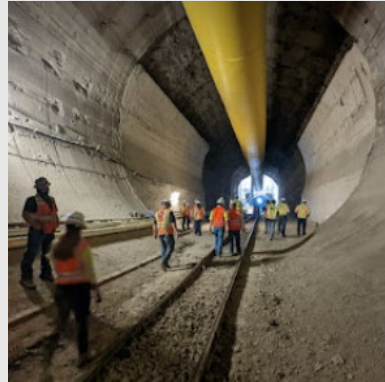
- Drainage Tunnels
 - I-35 Tunnel ~ 3 miles
 - Cesar Chavez ~ 3.5 miles
 - 70-ft to 200-ft deep
 - 22-ft interior diameter
 - 10 shafts for surface connections
- Pump Station
 - ~ 130,000 gpm pumping capacity
 - Large mechanical trash screen.



Drainage Tunnel and Pump Station - Overviews



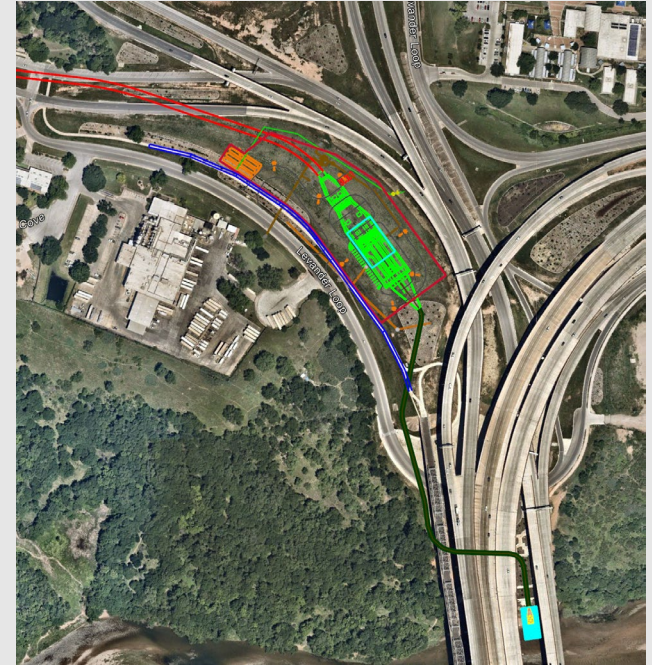
- Tunnel/Pump Contract Jan 2023
- Purpose of drainage tunnel project:
 - Collect stormwater runoff.
 - Provide treatment before water enters Colorado River.
- Original approach included use of detention ponds.
- Worked with City of Austin to design pump station:
 - Outfall to connect to Govalle Valley WTP.
 - Remaining rainfall pumped into river with minimal concerns.



Water Quality Treatment



- Original approach included use of water quality at US 183 interchange.
- Current approach is TxDOT partnering with COA to accommodate future offsite regional water quality pond.
 - Direct connection of the two low flow pumps (30,000 gpm each).
 - TxDOT to fund all associated improvements inside the pump station (est.\$5M).
 - COA to fund and construct the pressurized pipeline, acquire, build and maintain pond.
- Benefits:
 - Allows City to exceed their treatment criteria for the entire contributing drainage area.
 - Under no build scenario there is minimal treatment

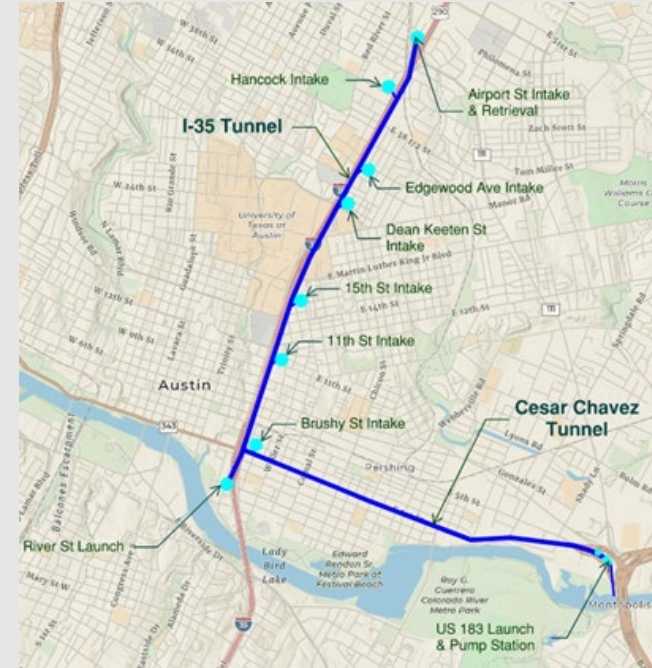


Outfall at US 183 Interchange

Water Quality Treatment



- Pump station site will include large mechanical trash screen.
- TxDOT partnering with COA to accommodate future offsite regional water quality pond.
 - Direct connection of the two low flow pumps (30,000 gpm each).
 - TxDOT to fund all improvements inside the pump station (est.\$5M).
 - COA to fund and construct the pressurized pipeline, acquire, build and maintain pond.
- Benefits:
 - Allows City to exceed their treatment criteria for the entire contributing drainage area.
 - Improves water quality issues in Boggy and Waller Creek.
 - Potential for treatment elsewhere on the project depending on feasibility.





- What was studied in the FEIS:
 - Carbon Monoxide
 - Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT)
- FEIS:
 - Disclosed area is currently attainment/unclassifiable for all Criteria Pollutants, including: ozone, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter.
 - MSAT are projected to decline into the future.
 - Overviewed methods for controlling construction emissions (fugitive dust and construction equipment exhaust).
 - Proposed visual monitoring of particulate levels and vehicle idling during construction.



- Draft EIS published in January 2023
- Hearing Held in February 2023
- Final EIS/ROD August 2023



- Mitigation, including, but not limited to:
 - Ongoing community engagement
 - \$9.4M to CapMetro for service during construction
 - Accelerate construction of CapMetro Red Line crossings
 - Advanced acquisition and relocation assistance to community facility renters
 - Esperanza Community expansion
 - \$100M toward aesthetics
 - Noise Barriers
 - Grant writing assistance and Permanent Noise Barrier for Festival Beach Community Garden and Festival Beach Food Forest
 - Participation in Construction Partnership Program and phone based app for construction
 - Stormwater Controls in partnership with the City of Austin
 - CapMetro T-ramp at Tech Ridge Park and Ride
 - Boardwalk Construction up to \$25M

Project Enhancements





- Summary of public input throughout environmental process:
 - 18,000+ virtual and in-person meeting participants
 - 110+ meetings with community leaders and members
 - 60+ agency coordination meetings and workshops
- Equitable outreach:
 - Focused efforts to gather input from EJ communities, including stakeholder and pop-in meetings.
 - Pop-up events and public meetings included:
 - Open House at Houston Tillotson University
 - Public Hearing at Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex

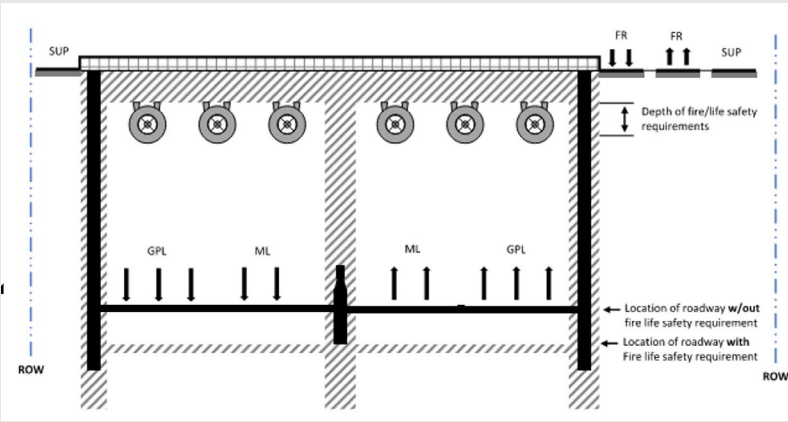
Next Steps



- TxDOT Continue to Sharpen our Pencils (11th/12th St Cap Designs)
- TxDOT Final Designs/Construction
- TxDOT will clear the City of Austin and UT Caps with a CE
- City of Austin Identify \$730M to Cap Funding identified by December



Deck Plaza	Construction Cost
Airport Boulevard	\$107 M
University of Texas/Dean Keeton Street	\$61 M
Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard	\$333 M
Downtown	\$230.2 M
Total	\$731.2 M



Legend

- TxDOT Elements (TxDOT Funded)
- CoA Cap/Stitch Elements (CoA Funded)
- CoA Surface Level Enhancements (CoA Funded) (SLE)
- Not Funded by TxDOT

Notes

TxDOT Construction Contract = [Diagonal Hatching] + [Solid Black]

CoA Construction Contract = [Grid Pattern]



THANK YOU

